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The Examiner is further thanked for the courtesy of a telephone interview with myself and the sole inventor, Jay Bass, on 01/13/2003.

For the Examiner's convenience a copy of the PTO-1449 and EPO Search Report on the counterpart European application are enclosed (the originals of these documents were mailed to the Patent Office on January 17, 2003 along with copies of the references listed on the 1449 form). The Examiner will note that the GB 2355716A and WO9841531A cited in the EPO Search Report, were cited in the PTO 1449 mailed Aug. 17, 2001 and considered by the Examiner on Nov. 1, 2001. The other references cited in the EPO Search Report were considered "A" references by the EPO (cited only for technological background). Accordingly, it is believed none of the references cited by the EPO Search Report raise any new issue for consideration in relation to the presently pending claims.

During the telephone interview the claims were generally discussed in view of the previously cited McGall et al. (US 6,238,862 B1) and Fisher (US 5,232,072) patents, and the 35 U.S.C. 112 first paragraph rejection was also discussed. It was agreed that incorporating the limitations of claim 21 (wherein the overlay composite "comprises a region of overlap of the droplet sub-sets") into the broadest independent claim (claim 19) would avoid any disclosure or suggestion by the foregoing prior art. It was also agreed that removal of the possibly confusing language added to claims 22 and 25 by the amendment mailed 03/11/2002 would overcome the 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph rejection. The Examiner indicated that an amendment filed with the foregoing changes and canceling claims 27, 28 would receive favorable consideration.

Accordingly, claim 19 has been amended to incorporate the limitation of claim 21 and claim 21 canceled. Claims 27, 28 have now also been canceled. Further, the language added to claims 22 and 25 (as well as claim 23) by the amendment mailed 03/11/2002 has now been deleted from those claims.

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Accordingly, it is believed that claims 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, and 26 should now be in condition for allowance. If the Examiner is of the view that there are any outstanding issues she is invited to call Gordon Stewart at (650)485-2386.

Respectfully submitted,



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